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Major insecurity, unpacked (Pg. 5)

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Students frustrated by MRU summer cyberattack

MRU's cyberattack harmed students at every step of their degree

Liam Rockcliffe, Contributor

On June 18, 2026, Mount Royal University (MRU) confirmed that a cybersecurity incident was threatening the school and several services, including MyMRU, leaving students unable to access online services or change anything related to their degree.

As universities rely more and more on technology and their online portals, they have become significantly more vulnerable to cyberattacks. With minimal ability to communicate and operate when these systems go down, these institutions have become a favourable target for hackers and criminal organisations such as the CMD organisation, which took responsibility for MRU's cyberattack.

CMD is a budding cyberattack group which has targeted several organisations via phishing. Once inside the organisation's data, CMD deletes and downloads whatever information would be most valuable to bidders or the ransom-takers from the affected company.

This is the case with the MRU cyberattack, where CMD deleted the contents of the 'J-Drive', which contains corporate data and staff information. CMD also accessed and downloaded the contents of the 'H-Drive', which is responsible for students' and employees' work, and may also contain the personal information of staff and students.

The data on the H-drive makes it the holy grail of ransomware.

According to online speculation on platforms such as Reddit, CMD allegedly demanded a ransom of $1.9 million, or 30 bitcoin, for MRU's information to be returned safely—however, nothing has been stated or confirmed by university officials.

Effect on students

However, the price of this information is not what hurt students the most.

Instead, it was the downtime of MRU resources and services that haunted every student, particularly first-year students.

For MRU business student Aiden Iverson, the loss of these services created immense stress.



Information Technology Services staff-only office. Photo by Karra Smith



Offering tech support, MyMRU help, and login assistance, students can locate Information Technology Services in E-wing . Photo by Karra Smith

Unable to access essential services such as My Schedule Builder or the base schedule adjuster, Iverson struggled to make the necessary changes to his graduation schedule.

With the uncertainty of when utilities would be back up, Iverson, like many students, felt pressure and concern that services may not be back up in time for the school year.

"Being unable to change–or even see my schedule just made me super uneasy. Especially since if I wasn't able to change my schedule, it could make graduation take even longer," Iverson said.

Registration is stressful for most students; knowing what classes to take and in what order is hard enough with the luxuries of my schedule builder and access to advisors; but remove these amenities, and it's easy to let your mind wander and stress build.

In the worst cases, such as late registrants or first-year students, these problems are only amplified.

For a student who did not complete registering for their classes—or barely started—this stall, where they were unable to register or see what was even available, creates stress and uncertainty for the year to come.

For first-year students, this cyberattack came at the worst possible time. While registration opens for first-years as early as April, it can take time for students to learn what classes to take or how the system works.

With most Canadian high schools wrapping up in late June, many soon-to-be university students have diplomas and final coursework to focus on and stress about. Tie the standard concerns of high school with the university you chose being cyber-attacked, and services going down just before you wind down for summer, it's not unreasonable to assume that first-year students may lose faith and even regret their choice of post-secondary school.

University support

MRU didn't just leave students alone with this stress when services went down. They set up a temporary on-campus Wi-Fi network for current students and faculty, launched an emergency webpage, maintained communication by sending regular emails to students and continued spring and summer classes while adapting to the cyberattack. Working alongside law enforcement and cybersecurity experts, MRU has resolved most issues arising from the cyberattack.

However, for most students affected by the cyberattack, the question remains: did MRU do enough to support them, or was it too little, too late?

Political parties welcomed at YYC Pride 2026

For the first time in three years, political parties will be allowed to apply to march

Karra Smith, News Editor



Thousands attended Calgary Pride in 2024. Photo by Bella Coco

Calgary Pride is preparing for its 35th annual pride celebration, which will take place from Aug. 31 to Sept. 6, but the organisation's decision to open the festivities to political parties has sparked conversations across the city about inclusion.

For the first time since 2023, Calgary Pride opened its applications to political parties to join in on the week of 2SLGBTQIA+ celebrations.

Pride and politics

An announcement made on July 31 by the Calgary Pride Committee outlined that any political entity wishing to participate in events had until Aug. 18 to submit an online application—and while any group could apply to be involved, only those meeting Calgary Pride's guidelines would be considered.

"Eligibility criteria include, but are not limited to, a demonstrated record of progressing the rights of marginalised communities–including advocacy for Indigenous communities, and formal, public policies that support 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals," the announcement stated.

According to the statement, this decision was made to "balance community safety, inclusion, accountability, and pride's role as a space for celebration and visibility."

But some are raising questions about which political parties will be included—particularly in online forums such as Reddit.

"Hard to wrap your head around this…is Calgary Pride assuming certain groups won't apply or do they have the stones to deny bad actors?" Reddit user FluffyEye666 wrote.

Political hurdles

Much of the discourse is centred around the United Conservative Party (UCP)'s eligibility.

In 2024, Alberta Premier Danielle Smith was banned from attending pride events across the province. In a statement that year, the group representing 14 pride societies across the province, Queer Citizens United YYC, said this action was a result of the UCP's policies on trans rights.

"This is a direct response to Premier Danielle Smith's stated intention to infringe on the rights, freedoms, and health care of the transgender community in Alberta," the statement read.

Since then, the UCP has also received significant backlash for its use of the notwithstanding clause in December 2025 in reference to Bill 9 amendments.

This has led many to question where the current governing party stands in terms of Calgary Pride 2026 and to criticise pride for allowing political parties to apply in the first place.

"Legitimately, we all know the UCP's stance on things. We all know the recently passed legislation. So why even toy around with this?" Says Reddit User blackRamCalgaryman.

While many have raised concerns about the province's political discourse, co-chair of Calgary Pride, Riley Sogge, said in the statement that, at this time, unity matters more than ever.

"It's a scary time to be a queer person, and we want to make sure that we are celebrating and standing up for–and with–those who stand up for us when we need it most," Sogge said in the announcement.

As many 2SLGBTQIA+ people have echoed their concerns citywide, SAMRU's Representation Executive Council President, Noel Ormita, says that support for students is available on campus and that creating an environment where all feel welcome is necessary for community growth.

"We do also recognise that, for some students, it may feel a little bit of discomfort, seeing those [political parties], but what we're trying to create is not just safe spaces, but also brave spaces for students; that's really essential in ensuring that their education, and their journey here at SAMRU, is supported," says Ormita.

The Reflector reached out to the UCP for comment, but did not receive a response.



2024 Calgary Pride attendees show off signs in support of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. Photo by Bella Coco

Smoothies are making a comeback at Wyckham

SAMRU is blending up a new student-run business to Wyckham House

Anais Loeppky, Web Editor

Last year, Wyckham House lost Booster Juice, leaving students without the smoothie option that had been available on campus for years. Now, students have a new option to fill that gap. The Students' Association of Mount Royal University (SAMRU) is preparing to launch West Gate Blends, a new smoothie business in Wyckham House.

A new addition to Wyckham House

West Gate Blends is described in a recent job posting as a "new campus smoothie hub" dedicated to serving the Mount Royal University community. SAMRU is currently hiring part-time staff for the new operation, with the position beginning in August 2026 and running until April 30, 2027.

The job posting provides some insight as to what students can expect from the new business.

The new smoothie hub will operate alongside other student-focused food and beverage spaces run by SAMRU.

The evolution of Wyckham House

West Gate Social, MRU's student-run pub, has been a beloved part of SAMRU's campus food and social programming for several years. West Gate Social opened in fall 2019 following student feedback collected by SAMRU about its previous restaurant and pub, The Hub.

According to SAMRU's 2019-2020 annual report, students identified social opportunities and food service as two of their top priorities for a student lounge. West Gate Social was subsequently designed around a value-focused food-and-beverage model.

SAMRU aimed for West Gate Social to be seen as a gathering place for students and chose to allow outside food & beverage to make the space more welcoming.

More recently, SAMRU reported that West Gate Social attracted 132,596 visitors during the fall, winter and spring semesters of the 2024-2025 academic year, a 10,000-person increase from the previous year. The space hosted events including Trivia Tuesdays and Thursday's Got Talent, as well as 22 club events. SAMRU's annual report also highlighted $7.25 meals and low-cost beverages as part of the space's offerings.

West Gate Blends will therefore enter an existing campus food environment rather than creating one from scratch. Its focus, however, will be different from the lounge and coffee kiosk already operated by SAMRU.

Student job opportunities

The new business will also create part-time employment opportunities for students and other potential applicants. The position is listed at $15.50 per hour, plus a share of the West Gate tip pool. Statistics Canada reported that the unemployment rate for students aged 15 to 24 reached 17.9 per cent in summer 2025, the highest rate recorded since 2009, aside from the pandemic year.

The position is structured around the academic calendar. Employees are expected to work from August 2026 until April 30, 2027, with the location closed during Mount Royal University's winter break. The listed operating hours are Monday through Thursday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Smoothies as a staple

The arrival of West Gate Blends also comes after a long history of smoothie and juice businesses operating in Wyckham House.

The Reflector reviewed Booster Juice as part of a 2009 Wyckham House food report, describing the business as offering drinks, paninis and wraps. Back then, The Reflector reported that drinks cost approximately $5, while combo meals could cost up to $10. However, at the time, Booster Juice received a grade of C, so hopefully Blend will secure an A+.

Anticipation

For students returning to Mount Royal this fall, the new smoothie hub will add another option to Wyckham House's food and beverage lineup.

After years of having a smoothie business in the student centre, West Gate Blends will bring the category back to campus in a new form. Exactly what will be in those cups, remains something students will have to wait to find out.



SAMRU's new smoothie shop will open when students return for classes. Photo by Karra Smith

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The invisible hierarchy of majors

Who really sits at the top–and why the ladder may be an illusion

Amal Mouaouia, Contributor

The question no student can seem to escape, the one asked at every family dinner, every first date, in lecture halls, by strangers and loved ones alike, is seemingly innocuous.

'What's your major?'

But for many students, this is never truly just a question. It is an appraisal. An almost imperceptible judgment that places them somewhere on an unspoken ladder. One that nobody officially endorses, and yet nearly every student can map with precision.

Engineering sits near the top. Medicine hovers above it. Business occupies an anxious middle.

The humanities drift toward the bottom, tethered there by the devastating follow-up, 'what do you do with that?'

This is the invisible hierarchy of university majors, a system with no formal architecture, yet one that shapes how students introduce themselves and how they value their own intellect. Which fields are soft, smart, or punchlines and whether they can state their discipline out loud without flinching.

Beyond campus

The instinct to rank fields of study is by no means a modern innovation. Throughout history, some disciplines have been deemed more serious, useful or intelligent than others.

However, this prestige has never been fixed. Society's regard for certain majors has shifted in response to politics, economics, war, industry and cultural anxiety. What society values in education tends to reveal what society believes it needs.

In Ancient Rome, education for elite men was centred on rhetoric, philosophy, poetry, history and ethics, as these subjects were considered imperative for participation in civil life.

During the Renaissance, scholars renewed emphasis on history, literature, classical languages and moral philosophy, believing education should form character. In these traditions, to be educated was not to be employable, but rather to be articulate, historically informed, ethically serious and capable of participating in public and intellectual life.

The value once placed in these studies contrasts with the reality many modern humanities students currently face.

Are some majors given more?

Mount Royal University history and psychology student Ry-Lynne Cambell says this shift can still be felt in how her education is valued today.

"Sometimes it feels as though there are many more opportunities for STEM students," she says. "This perception has made me feel that I have to work harder to be recognised in my field."

The historical context begs the question: if what society values is prone to change, can we expect the pendulum to eventually swing back towards the liberal arts?

While there is no clear answer, capitalism has become the dominating force of modern life, and education has become increasingly tied to productivity and the job market.

University of Calgary (UofC) computer science student Abdul Rahim feels that his major has become increasingly less serious.

"It literally sounded like a CIA-level job to be in comp-sci, but now it's one of those majors that's deemed totally pointless since the job market in tech is garbage right now," he says. "It's almost laughable now to even be majoring in comp-sci."

Rahim offers the perspective that it is not simply that STEM fields are deemed valuable, but rather the majors are performing best in our current job landscape.

Clearly, we are far from Ancient Rome, as we no longer ask ourselves, 'what kind of individual does this education form?' but rather 'what career does this education lead to?'



Students are feeling insecure about their field of study, but the anxiety isn't anything new. Photo courtesy of MRU

Cambell points to the issue that a degree does not lack value, but rather others fail to see it as legible in a market-minded culture.

"Employment connection is the reason why other majors can be seen as prestigious. With science degrees, it's almost guaranteed employment," says Cambell.

A similar push towards employability appears even in fields that are more often regarded with rigour.

UofC biomedical science student Ravnoor Dhadly described the awkwardness of sharing her degree, only to be met with questions about her career trajectory.

"The first question I get is 'what do you want to do with your degree?' or 'so you want to go to medical school?'" she says. "Saying yes sets the bar so high while saying no invites the assumption that the degree leads nowhere."

Even a well-regarded field can come to be viewed with suspicion when its career path is not guaranteed.

Despite students generally disagreeing with the notion that one field of study is more legitimate than another, the structure remains.

Hierarchies upon hierarchies

Amira Najmadeen, a marketing student at the University of Alberta, found there was also an internal hierarchy in the business program.

"Within business, accounting majors are on the higher end, finance used to be perceived as higher but less so now due to the sheer amount of finance students, and business law and economics are higher up as well," she says.

Dhadly also finds a science-major sub-ladder.

"Some people view health science as higher status than a biology major because the class is smaller and the acceptance rate is lower," she says.

Many disciplines seem to contain their own miniature hierarchy, replicating the same logic that ranks the disciplines themselves. It's hierarchies all the way down.

While students can describe the hierarchy and locate themselves and others within it, they all vehemently reject it. This structure is not sustained by student conviction, but rather by inertia. It is sustained by adults who question the practicality of your degree, by centuries of cultural priorities, and by the stereotypes and jokes associated with each major.

If the past teaches anything, it's that societies revalue knowledge when circumstances change.

An evolution

Already, there are signs that the conversation is shifting. As artificial intelligence, automation and digital saturation transform work and communication, the skills long associated with the humanities may come to be widely regarded as essential.

However, students cannot wait for history to vindicate them. Young people are choosing their futures now. Making decisions in a system that rewards legibility over curiosity, and the cost of this is not only personal.

Every student who abandons a field they love for one they can more easily defend at a dinner table represents a quiet loss for the professions they leave behind.

More than a safe space: Calgary Rainbow Room

The recently opened community centre focuses on connection amidst a changing politcal climate

Acacia Carol, Layout Editor

This June, Calgary welcomed a new kind of community centre to the Beltline. Born out of a 50-year advocacy career with the End of the Rainbow Foundation, the Calgary Rainbow Room centre works alongside five partner organisations to provide language, medical and social support along with other services for all kinds of Calgarians.

The Rainbow Room service centre lead, Kerry Rasmussen, says that while the space isn't "radical at all," the Rainbow Room wants to focus on creating a centre that is safe and full of joy.

However, some of the services offered by the Rainbow Room stand in direct opposition to legislation from the governing UCP. The Outlink lending library is stocked with books that have been removed from shelves or banned following a ministerial order by the Minister of Education.

Rasmussen estimates that the space sees around 100 individuals per month. While she's grateful for the community the centre is currently supporting, she knows that there are more individuals that the space could help.

The centre is also undergoing renovations to create a computer space for individuals to attend medical appointments or browse the web, and currently hosts a program three times a week for people to make or tailor gender-affirming clothing.

"On the whole, this is a place that we can be very proud of," she says.

Unsafe spaces

As with many spaces created for marginalised populations, safety is a big consideration for the Rainbow Room. In 2024, a Leger poll found that half of 2SLGBTQIA+ respondents felt unsafe in public. For queer students, an Egale poll found that 60 per cent felt unsafe in the classroom.

That unease isn't just from policy changes, like the utilisation of the notwithstanding clause to pass Bill 9, either.

According to a Government of Canada report on police reported hate crimes from 2014 to 2024, incidents motivated by sexual orientation were the third most commonly reported, following religion and ethnicity. In June, the odds of a sexual orientation-related hate incident doubled.

"Sometimes people will circle the building many times before they come in. And then when they do come in, they're shy and nervous," Rasmussen says. "We all work really hard to make sure everybody feels comfortable."



People gather at the Rainbow Room in Calgary's Beltline area. Photo courtesy of the Rainbow Room

Born from a personal experience, Rasmussen also says that creating relationships with the Calgary police's Diversity Resource Team is another avenue the centre explores to foster community.

Threats to the queer community aren't new ground for the folks at both the Rainbow Room and the End of the Rainbow Foundation.

Rasmussen says that before the centre, the End of the Rainbow Foundation focused on connecting LGBTQ+ refugees escaping persecution or death with local resources in Calgary.

But the struggles of the queer community aren't what Rasmussen wants to focus on when speaking about the Rainbow Room. For her, the space is as much a social hub as it is a support network.

With all the support the organisations inside the Rainbow Room receive, giving back is equally as important. Rainbow Elders, a group of 2SLGBTQIA+ seniors, meets within the centre to raise money for Camp fYrefly, a leadership retreat for queer and trans youth.

"It's a really neat mix of people that are genuinely providing wonderful service for the community," she says.



Calgary's new Rainbow Room in the Beltline provides a fun new atmosphere for queer communities in the city. Photo courtesy of the Rainbow Room

Proud future

With Calgary Pride around the corner and warnings that 2026 could be the event's last year due to a lack of corporate funding, other local companies and organisations have begun to band together.

Local drag performer and MRU professor Karla Marx spoke in an Instagram video on Aug. 22 about the collaboration between "local gals" to secure funding for the upcoming ticketed Pride on the Island event with headliner and RuPaul's Drag Race All Stars winner Trixie Mattel.

"We got together, and we decided we wanted to help Pride make some money this year because we knew that they were on some tough straits," Marx said in the video.

Rasmussen says that collaboration with other organisations is something the Rainbow Room also wants to focus on. Although it's been an eventful year for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, she believes putting in the work to create a safe space is important.

"We are not hiding who we are as a community, and [we are] showing people where we've come from, where we are now and how we are going to continue to grow and be there for each other," she says.

How to shop sustainably in Calgary

Local stores are looking to lessen climate-related stress

Emma Voelpel, Features Editor



More and more stores throughout Calgary are providing zero-waste options for shopping. Photo courtesy of cotton bro / Pexels

As environmental consciousness grows among Canadians, Calgary is growing a sustainable shopping scene that is thriving with a mix of zero-waste refilleries, vintage boutiques and shops that strive to use recyclable or compostable materials.

These markets aren't appearing out of nowhere—the environmental context behind the need for them is what makes them more important than ever.

The environmental case

One of the biggest polluters in today's day and age is single-use plastic. With material being a major part of packaging, it continues to create a high volume of carbon emissions. In 2019, the plastic industry released emissions equal to 189 coal power plants. Plastic itself is also rarely recycled and ends up in landfills, contributing to the growing environmental challenge that continues to persist.

A close accomplice to the plastic industry is fast fashion. An estimated 1.2 billion tons of carbon emissions are released by the fashion industry each year. The materials that make up the majority of clothing manufactured today are primarily nylon, spandex, or polyester— fabrics that would take from 20 to 200 years to decompose in a landfill. Beyond that, according to Earth.org, consumers are purchasing and donating clothes at a rapid rate, with a large portion of those donations skipping the shelves and going straight to the dump.

These emissions are consistently affecting the environment, and their effects are causing an immense amount of eco-anxiety among Canadians. According to a survey conducted by the Mental Health Commission of Canada, about 75 per cent of Canadians who were surveyed confirmed to be experiencing some form of climate-related distress.

Taking meaningful action can be as little as incorporating sustainable choices into everyday life. Reducing single-use plastics, prioritising recycling and composting are small things that have a huge impact.

Refill and zero-waste markets

According to Plastic-Free YYC, one of the biggest trends that's been on the rise throughout Calgary is refilleries—stores where customers bring their own containers and buy only what they need, eliminating the need for single-use packaging.

The Apothecary in Inglewood is considered one of Calgary's first refilleries. Opening in 2017, the store offers pure essential oils, bulk herbs and refillable household products. Customers can bring their own container and refill everything they need from dish soap to shampoo, paying by weight.

Canary Goods, located in Kensington, is another favourite among sustainable shoppers. While also offering refilling services for customers to bring in their own containers, the store carries a wide variety of biodegradable items, from personal hygiene products to household cleaning products.

Without Co. is the most recent addition to the sustainable shopping trend. Located right on Calgary's 17th Ave, the store carries solely Canadian products that are either biodegradable or made with recyclable materials, all tested by the store itself.

The company has stated on its website that its goal is to provide quality products while continuing to generate less waste.

Other places that offer refillable services include Community Natural Foods. This local grocer was the first to get rid of plastic bags and strives to source its produce from local farmers to reduce harmful agricultural practices.

Shopping second-hand

Calgary's thrift scene has also grown significantly. From curated vintage shops to high-end consignment stores, shoppers are increasingly choosing pre-loved fashion over fast fashion.

Humane Thrift, also located in Kensington, opened in 2025 in response to the amount of waste that mainstream thrift stores produce.

Minal Shah, the store's owner, told the Calgary Journal last year that any clothing they're unable to sell will go to those who are in need—such as hospitals or shelters. As for the store itself, item prices remain at $20 or less to compete with the low prices of fast fashion brands.

Urban Thrift is a consignment store located in Calgary's northeast. Its mission is to resell quality items at a fraction of their original price, making quality-made items more accessible while encouraging sustainable consumption by keeping fast-fashion items off their shelves.

The Peacock Consignment and Boutique has several stores throughout the city. They provide practical strategies to keep as many clothing items out of landfills as possible, from second-hand finds to supporting local artists from Calgary or the surrounding area.

The bigger picture

Sustainable shopping in Calgary is becoming a larger movement. Whether it's refilling shampoo, buying handmade zero-waste essentials from local vendors or buying used products rather than new ones, consumers have more options than ever to align their shopping habits with their environmental values.

The common thread across all these stores is a shift in mindset—moving away from disposable convenience towards durability, reusability and mindful consumption. As more Calgarians embrace this approach, the city's sustainability scene is likely to continue to grow.

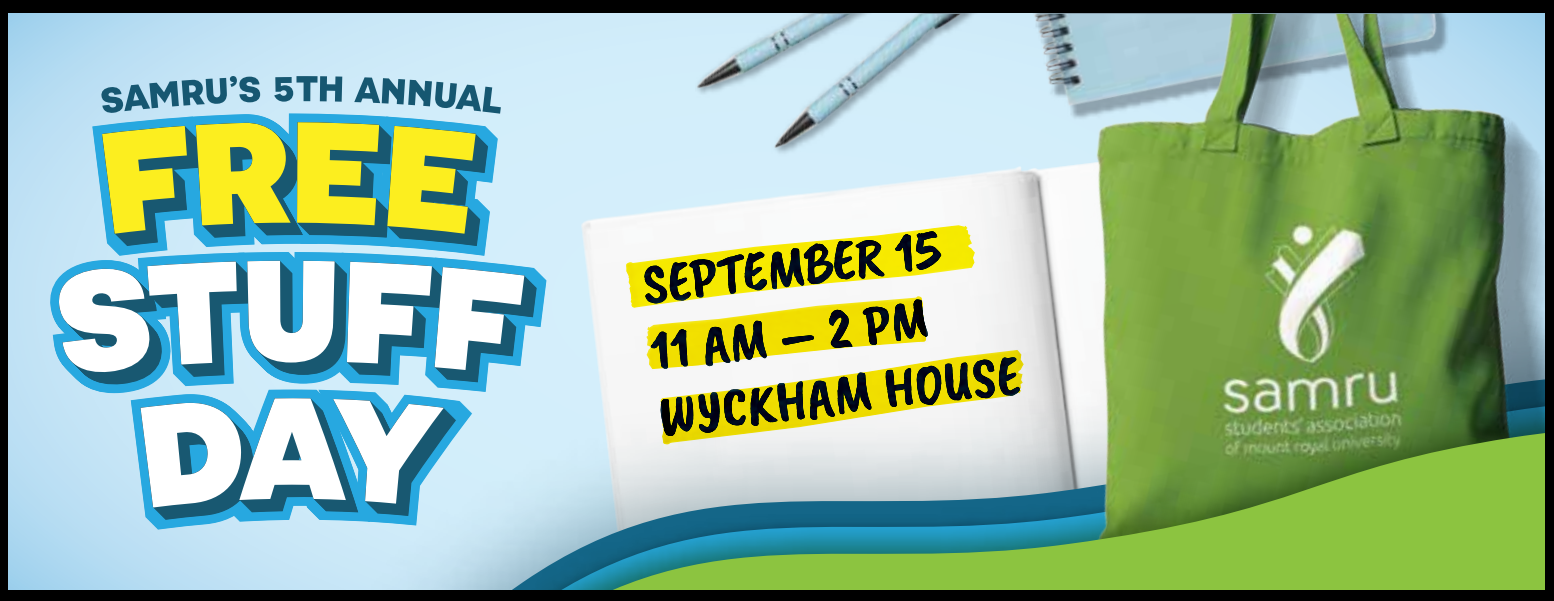


Plastic waste continues to create more than 850 metric tonnes of greenhouse gases. Photo courtesy of Ron Lach / Pexels

samru students' association of mount royal university

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Your fall reading forecast

A back-to-school reading list that you actually want to read

Katrina Ebuenga, Contributor

As a new semester approaches, the pressure of upcoming readings has students already reeling from cracking open textbooks set for the new term.

To save you from those academic reading slumps, here are some anticipated titles that offer a reprieve from fall semester reading blues.



Inside Nocturne Books, Alberta's first horror-focused indie bookstore, located in Calgary.
Photo by Katrina Ebuenga

Rooted by Leopoldo Goût

With a prologue that hooks you fast and sets the bar high, *Rooted* by Leopoldo Goût, releasing on Sept. 15, is a grotesque and atmospheric novel that explores Mesoamerican mythologies.

The protagonist, Aurora, is an art lawyer who tasks herself with repatriating artworks back to their rightful homes. When she discovers an Aztec god statue in New Mexico City, she also uncovers something far more sinister than she expected.

As Aurora tries to fight the haunting allure of the statue, her sanity continues to slip over the edge. She is tested by her own psychological deterioration, all the while attempting to uncover the truth about the statue and her family's lineage.

Despite being a slow-burn horror, there are elements of body horror and ritualistic themes that hover throughout the novel. The slower pace of the book creates an eerie atmosphere, to say the least, and I would highly recommend this read for those who enjoy both horror and psychological thrillers.

And, while the horror aspects are quite grand in their own way, Goût creates a multi-layered narrative that exceeds the typical absurdity of the horror genre.

The Ship of Death by Kyle Winkler

For Dungeons & Dragons enthusiasts, this cosmic horror novel creates a sense of creeping dread that has you anticipating the worst that has yet to come.

Set to release on Sept. 28, *The Ship of Death* by Kyle Winkler follows a couple who are given the chance to test an indie board game called "The Ship of Death."

Rolling the dice becomes more dangerous as the game progresses into a complicated web of tasks and character cards.

In this novel, the line between role-play and reality quickly fades as the characters become too engrossed in the lives they have created in game. And, as people from their real lives start to trickle into the game, it becomes more difficult to distinguish between what is real and what is not.

As the tabletop game becomes more wildly complex, the use of poignant detail and skilful omission shapes the atmosphere of the novel as haunting and uncanny.

With its unique narrative told solely through email chains, game reports, personal journal entries and police reports, this horror novel keeps you fully immersed from the jump.

Winkler creates an enthralling novel that combines *House of Leaves* by Mark Z. Danielewski and *Jumanji*, crafting the perfect mix to set a new gameplay in motion.

This read comes with low stakes, but with every flip of the page feeling like the worst to come, it will have you hoping for the perfect D20 success roll in the end.

Milkteeth by Caitlin Starling

Milkteeth by Caitlin Starling releases Oct. 20 and brings an alternative take on a vampire tale.

In this queer supernatural horror, the duality of motherhood and the pursuit of survival are upheld with the utmost importance.

The protagonist, Beatrice, spends her immortal life caring for newly made vampires, who depend upon the web of secrecy she weaves. However, when Beatrice decides to take a third youngling in, her body begins to weaken at an increasingly fast rate.

Making her home in an abandoned office basement, Beatrice creates a secret sanctuary for young nurslings, where she acts as their 'Broodmother,' caring, nursing and feeding the younglings until they mature.

When she starts to seek advice from the mortal world, however, her own hunger starts to spiral as she loses control over her body and monstrous instincts.

The narrative is told from the perspective of Beatrice in a way that feels like a bedtime story. There are moments that feel interrupted by another listener, but it is not clear who exactly Beatrice is talking to, much like *Interview with the Vampire* by Anne Rice.

Despite the violence and bloodthirsty acts of Beatrice, I found myself admiring the poetic tone that made the events more digestible for new horror readers.

Defy the Dusk by Danielle L. Jensen

For readers looking for a more fantasy-forward novel, Danielle L. Jensen, a Calgarian author of *The Bridge Kingdom* series and *A Fate Inked in Blood* Series, brings a whole new duology this fall.

Defy the Dusk is set to release Nov. 3, and the book will be the first in the *Sundering Duet* series.

Elemental magic is seen as the abomination that doomed the world in this dystopian, post-apocalyptic, romanstasy novel, where one person's magic has the ability to throw off the world's balance.

Lirien, the protagonist, is set on making things right after her magic ruined her world years ago, resulting in the awakening of dangerous creatures that now rule the night, the Straxi.

However, when she attempts to go after the king who rules the survivors, she is taken hostage and forced to defend against the Straxi or else her life is forfeit.

The enemies-to-lovers relationship between Vox, the king, and Lirien had me clutching the book and wanting more. While their chemistry and banter stayed at the forefront of the novel, the yearning and angst that arose throughout kept the novel emotionally complex.

Defy the Dusk is action-packed and is sprinkled with my favourite romantasy tropes, such as forced proximity, found family, and morally grey characters. Jensen blends each element together while still upholding their individual qualities.

With a strong female character such as Lirien paired with a unique magic system, this novel is reminiscent of both *Mad Max* and *Mortal Engines*.

OUT'N ABOUT

Inglewood Pride

Hosted by the community of Inglewood for Calgary Pride Week, Back to the Streets is a pride festival set to take over the neighbourhood from Sept. 4 to Sept. 6. Across three days, enjoy drag, music, pop-up deals and markets hosted by participating businesses. For more information, visit inglewoodpride.ca

Calgary Vegfest

Calgary Vegfest, presented by the Calgary Vegan Society, is a brand new event coming to the Sunalta Community Hall and Hub on Sept. 5. Enjoy delicious plant-based meals, live music, educational speakers and more at the event's debut. Admission to the event is by donation at the entrance.

The 'Masters'

Presented by Spruce Meadows, the 'Masters' is one of four Majors in the Rolex Grand Slam of Show Jumping, the pinnacle of equestrian sport. From Sept. 9 to Sept.13, enjoy celebrated riders, full access to the grounds and live entertainment with all general admission tickets. Prices vary; tickets available at sprucemeadows.com

Monster Jam

For three days, GMC Stadium will be home to huge stunt trucks catching big air every night. Monster Jam, a motorsport event featuring specialised off-road vehicles with heavy-duty suspension, is set to return from Sept. 11 to Sept. 13. For more information and ticket prices, visit monsterjam.com

Checking the pulse on Calgary's music strategy

Can Cowtown achieve its dreams as a music-centric city?

Nadoo Abaagu, Contributor

In 2024, the music advocacy organisation West Anthem released a strategy for making Calgary a bona fide music city.

The plan was to nurture, highlight, and, most importantly, promote Calgary's music industry. It's been two years since that report, but has the plan borne any fruit?

The Mastering of a Music City, a 2015 report released by Music Canada and IFPI, describes a music city as "communities of various sizes that have a vibrant music economy which they actively promote."

The definition is vague because no two music cities look the same. Each city is filled with a unique convergence of artists, but the one thing that is the same across music landmarks around the globe is big business.

According to the Canadian Live Music Association, the Canadian live music industry and live music tourism generated close to $11 billion in GDP in 2023. It employed over 100,000 people and contributed $5.84 billion in Canadian labour income.

Beyond the economy, music cities also contribute to community life and individual wellbeing.

"Music has a role—and everyone already knows this instinctively—of bringing people together, creating conversations, and sometimes facilitating understanding and compromise between people who have different cultural backgrounds," said Andrew Mosker, president and CEO of the National Music Centre and co-founder of West Anthem, in a statement to Nuvo Magazine.

Most of the benefits of Canada's music industry have been concentrated in Ontario. The province has the largest music industry in Canada and remains its music capital.

Still, the benefits to Alberta and Calgarians are clear to West Anthem. To build a music city in Calgary, they called for a union between audiences, infrastructure and government support.

Mosker, speaking to the Calgary Herald, emphasised the importance of Calgarians supporting their music economy.

"When friends come to town, instead of only taking them to Banff, [we should say] 'we have an incredible music scene here, an incredible music district, I'm going to take you down here because you need to see this part of town.'"

West Anthem's vision for Calgary is one where the city attracts artists and nurtures local talent and where music contributes to the economy and the health of communities. It's a version of Calgary where artists can both work and live in the city, but just how close has Calgary gotten to that vision?

West Anthem reports many successful strides. The organisation has engaged in advocacy in Alberta tourism and worked with government agencies to push funding forward.

In 2025, Calgary was selected as the host city for the 2026 Music Cities Convention, and the Alberta Music Cities Grant program distributed $76,350 to nine experimental music projects primarily in Calgary and Edmonton.

One special recipient of the program was the independent live music festival, East Town Get Down. The festival takes place across multiple venues in East Calgary. This project received $9,270 to build partnerships with Alberta-based events and create performance opportunities outside of the festival.

Tourism Calgary has also begun to define Calgary according to its arts and culture.

The newly launched tourism campaign has created opportunities to fund and promote Calgary artists and the city's music scene through projects like the Blue Sky City Creative Challenge.

Still, for everyday Calgarians and artists, the city has not tangibly changed, with live music venues continuing to decline.

Between 2020 and 2023, Calgary lost many music venues because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but the future of live music venues remains volatile, according to a 2025 Calgary Cultural Spaces Infrastructure Report.

Nonetheless, attendance across many of Calgary's largest music festivals remains very high. The Calgary Stampede welcomed over 1.4 million guests in 2026, while the Calgary Folk Festival entertained over 50,000 attendees.

But for smaller festivals and venues, the consumer cost-of-living crisis, infrastructure ownership challenges and noise bylaws are hard to overcome.

In June, Country Thunder 2026 was cancelled just days before the festivities were set to start. The organisation claimed a loss in key infrastructure and restrictive noise bylaws made it impossible to continue the festival.

Despite these current problems in Calgary, Alberta is still looking to expand music opportunities across the province.

At the end of April 2026, the Government of Alberta released its first-ever Alberta Music Action Plan. The document is shaped by West Anthem's 2024 recommendations and a roundtable held in October 2024.

The Alberta Music Action Plan outlines how the province will nurture talent, foster industry connections, remove barriers to funding and amplify Albertan artists on the world stage.

"Together, we are tuning up Alberta's music sector to hit all the right notes," said Tanya Fir, Alberta minister of arts, culture and status of women, in the report.

"Our government is committed to supporting and investing in creators and visionaries to bring more music business to Alberta and share the talent of Alberta's music sector with a world audience."



Calgary-based trio, CG Tears, plays an electric set at the independent music festival East Town Get Down. Photo by Dave Kotsibie

UP & COMING

Moments Fest Siksika

Moments Fest Siksika began as an intimate, community-centred event in the Siksika Nation, but has since blossomed into an international festival attracting artists from across North America. This year, the festival will take place from Sept. 4 to 6, with tickets available now.

Rockin' 4 Dollar$

Every Thursday, this venue invites Calgary bands and artists to play 15-minute sets for the chance to win prizes. Rockin' 4 dollars has been a launching pad for many of Calgary's biggest artists, from Shy Friend to Astrocaster.

Ironwood Stage and Grill

The Ironwood Stage and Grill hosts more than 400 live shows each year. This year, the iconic Calgary venue is celebrating its 20th anniversary from Sept. 12 to 13, with live music and good food available all weekend long.

Calgary's radio silence

How community radio continues to tell local stories

Anais Loeppky, Web Editor

Radio has been a way to tell stories and share art for over 100 years. However, the industry continues to dramatically shift as podcasts, streaming services and social media become increasingly accessible.

Off the air

On July 7, two of Calgary's radio stations were suddenly shut down. Both 660 NewsRadio Calgary and Sportsnet 960 Calgary were closed by Rogers Sports & Media.

The shutdown also included four other Canadian stations and resulted in 230 job cuts. The other closures included 1130 NewsRadio and Sportsnet 650 in Vancouver, 95.7 NewsRadio in Halifax and 570 NewsRadio in Kitchener.

The closures meant Calgary lost both a major local news station and its dedicated sports radio station.

While Sportsnet 960 had been a longtime home for Calgary Flames radio broadcasts and the Calgary Stampeders, 660 NewsRadio provided local news and information to Calgary listeners.

In an email statement to CTV News, Rogers cited declining audience numbers and reduced advertising revenue as reasons for the closures.

This also came as part of broader organisational changes at Rogers Sports & Media, raising questions about the future of local broadcasting and how much locally produced media remains available to Calgary audiences.

Where homegrown voices live

While the closures highlight the challenges faced by commercial radio, Calgary's community radio continues to operate in its own way.

CJSW, Calgary's only campus and community broadcaster, has been broadcasting on the FM dial for over 40 years and was the 13th FM station in Calgary.

CJSW is a not-for-profit station that broadcasts in 10 different languages and has 110 programs in its weekly grid, all run by volunteers.

The volunteer-driven model allows CJSW to create programming curated to the community's interests. It also creates an environment for up-and-coming artists and storytellers to share their work and contribute to Calgary's media landscape.

Adam Kamis, the station manager of CJSW, explains the impact of having large corporations owning such a large portion of the media.

"Essentially, they allowed Rogers to buy Shaw, which is kind of like the culmination of 30 years of amalgamation of our broadcasting sector in this country," he says.

Kamis adds that 20 years ago, Calgary had substantially more independently owned broadcasters. He compares this to today, where many of these independent stations have been swallowed by large corporations.

"[Corporations will] take over the station, and then rip out all the local programming, thinking that they can substitute at a one-to-one level, using programming that is not emanating from our community."

When asked about the importance of listening to radio, especially for university students, Kamis explains the significance of community, campus and public radio, which provide media that are not motivated by profit incentive.

He cites local radio as being essential to enjoying curated and accredited media with no subscriptions attached, only a willingness to listen with an open mind.



A look inside the radio booth at the CJSW studio, located on the University of Calgary campus. Photo by Emma Marshall



petal
Ariana Grande
Republic Records/ Babydoll Music
Score: B-

Following the success of her 2024 album *Eternal Sunshine*, Ariana Grande delivers an experimental yet familiar sound on her eighth album, *petal*. The first release under her new imprint, Babydoll Music, Grande attempts to write something vulnerable about toxic romantic relationships and her experience with stardom.

The release of the single "hate that i made you love me," which charted #1 on Spotify, left fans anticipating an album with a different sound. Unfortunately, the high expectations of the single's release fell short, as *petal* tended to retreat into familiar sounds and repetitive lyricism.

I believe the album starts fairly strong with the synth-pop sound in "kiss me," followed by "hate that i made you love me." The delicate sound of these tracks suits Grande's high register, which she recently began shifting to since *Wicked*.

However, I found the subsequent tracks "petal," "stay," and "like i do" too similar to tracks like "7 rings" from 2019.

Although Grande described her writing style for this album as coming from a place of "unfiltered rage," I find some of the lyrics surface-level and cringey, especially in the ninth track, "like i do."

Yes, this album is experimental, but it is not original, as each song felt like something I had heard before, whether on the current charts or from her older albums.

If someone began to play the album, I wouldn't tell them to turn it off—but I wouldn't necessarily tell them to turn it up.

—Hannah Flammenspeck



Foreign Tongues
The Rolling Stones
Polydor Records
Score: B+

Although I am often disappointed by new releases from classic, iconic bands or artists, I found myself enjoying this new album by the Rolling Stones.

Following their latest release in 2023, *Hackney Diamonds*, and their second collaboration with producer Andrew Watt, I believe the essence of the Rolling Stones is there—perhaps just slightly watered down.

The standouts for me were "Rough And Twisted," a bluesy romp-style song, and "Jealous Lover," where Mick Jagger's impressive falsetto brings me back to "Emotional Rescue" from 1980.

My favourite parts of the album were the guitar riffs, expertly handled by original band members Keith Richards and Ronnie Wood. Even in a pop-rock ballad-type song like "In The Stars," I felt that where the vocals and lyrics fell short, the riffs and guitar work really redeemed the tune.

I think that the familiarity of this album is its strength. The Rolling Stones were not trying to create a new genre or appeal to new fans, but to give listeners a piece of what they once were.

The disco-esque tunes are reminiscent of their 1978 album *Some Girls*, and the bluesy, R&B sounds remind me of the albums *Exile on Main Street* and *Sticky Fingers*, released in 1972 and 1971, respectively.

Overall, I do not believe this album is going to launch the Rolling Stones into a new era of relevancy, but for Rolling Stones fans, it blends aspects of the group's older works in a more modern style, giving fans new material that doesn't sound too foreign despite the title of the album.

— Hannah Flammenspeck

That willingness to encounter something new is a part of what separates community radio from carefully personalised algorithms. It gives listeners the opportunity to stumble across an artist or perspective they never would have found on their own.

For the punks, the poets and everyone in between

In a city with such a large footprint, it can be hard to find groups of people with common interests, especially when the topic is more niche.

At CJSW, Kamis experiences first-hand the role radio plays in bringing people together.

"If you're a punk and trying to find a cool punk platform, hearing something like CJSW kind of opens up a road [of discovery]," he says.

With such a diverse range of programming, he believes there is something for everyone at CJSW.

"I can guarantee there'll be at least an hour that would appeal to anybody."

Radio isn't dead; it's just changing

CJSW often hears people dismiss radio as a dying medium.

However, Kamis believes that perception is largely shaped by their experience with commercial radio. He refers to these commercial radio stations as "soulless," saying they aim to make a profit rather than a connection.

Local stations thus believe that there is still a desire for something more genuine, especially in an increasingly digital and AI-driven media landscape.

"There are some people that are generally thirsting for authenticity," Kamis says.

For listeners, the recent closures reduce the number of places where Calgarians can turn for programming created specifically for their city. While streaming services and podcasts allow audiences to access more content than ever before, much of that content is designed for broad or personalised audiences rather than a specific, local community.

Community broadcasters like CJSW fill a different role, giving local musicians, organisations, and specific communities a place to be heard.

For university students, in particular, community radio can offer an alternative to the highly personalised media feeds they see every day. It is undeniable that commercial radio is changing. However, local stations like CJSW believe the need for local voices is not.

Community radio offers a platform for people and perspectives that can easily be overlooked by larger media organisations.

And, as Calgary's traditional radio landscape continues to shrink, Kamis worries that the consequences could extend beyond the loss of local programming.

"It's kind of crazy to think Canada's third-largest city could be classified as a news desert because there isn't local media."



The main entrance of Calgary's only campus and community radio station, CJSW. Photo by Emma Marshall

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Sports Editor Elect
Julia Finot
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The rise of the 'sports girl'

Women are reshaping the way they engage with sports

Anais Loeppky, Web Editor



67 per cent of Canadians consider themselves a fan of female sports, which is the equivalent of more than 17 million people. Photo by Omar Ramadan / Pexels

Canada's professional women's sports market has doubled in two years, reaching an estimated $380 to $400 million in 2025 and a projected $570 million by 2030.

In the first half of 2026, there was an 18 per cent increase in viewership of women's sports compared to the same period in 2025.

This is not a matter of women suddenly becoming interested in sports, but of women creating their own spaces within sports culture.

From TikTok creators explaining baseball through humour and slang to Taylor Swift becoming a publicity machine for the National Football League (NFL), women are finding new ways into sports culture.

In Canada, where professional women's sports have expanded rapidly in recent years, this change has become increasingly prominent.

For decades, much of mainstream sports marketing has been directed toward male audiences. Sports fans are familiar with the beer commercials and the overdone locker-room humour, but now, we are seeing marketing that targets women.

One example is a TikTok trend started by creator Kait Maniscalco called "Baseball for Baddies." Maniscalco, along with other TikTok creators, makes videos that explain sports in a way that appeals to a female audience.

Maniscalco's videos are made without assuming that her viewers already understand basic baseball terminology. Instead, she and other creators make learning about the sport a part of the entertainment.

Canada's changing sports landscape

Canada, in particular, has seen a dramatic change in women's sports. According to Canadian Women & Sport, Canada's professional women's sports market has doubled since 2023.

In 2024, the Professional Women's Hockey League (PWHL) was created. During the 2025 to 2026 season, it attracted more than 1.1 million fans and averaged 9,304 spectators per game, a 28 per cent increase from the previous season.

For many fans and athletes, the PWHL represents a long-overdue investment in women's hockey, providing athletes with higher salaries and the opportunity to be treated as valued professionals.

Fans have also seen a drastic change right here in Calgary. The city is home to Calgary Wild FC, a founding club in Canada's Northern Super League (NSL), the country's first professional women's soccer league.

In the 2025 season, the league's final attracted more than 1.1 million Canadian viewers. The league also gained significant traction on social media, with more than 4.5 million impressions in just one week.

For local soccer fans, this provides an opportunity to cheer on a professional team from their own city and participate in a growing sports community. Seeing women play professional sports in their city makes fans feel much closer.

In our sports girl era

When talking about women finding new spaces within sports communities, Taylor Swift comes to mind almost instantly.

When Swift was first spotted attending a Kansas City Chiefs game in 2023, nobody quite anticipated the amount of attention she would bring to the NFL. In early 2025, it was reported that Swift had generated an estimated $992,361,912 worth of publicity for the NFL.

Swift's presence demonstrated how quickly sports can become part of popular culture. Her enormous female fanbase suddenly started paying attention to football, turning game days into something that extended far beyond the turf.

Swifties who had never cared about football suddenly found themselves learning positions, rules, teams and rivalries. Some became genuine fans, while others became interested in the cultural spectacle surrounding the games. There were even Taylor Swift-themed Super Bowl watch parties.

Gameday is for the girls

The growing presence of women in the sports community is also changing men's sports.

Women are increasingly interested in supporting hockey, football, baseball, basketball, soccer and Formula 1. Sometimes they are attracted to the game; however, the players, fashion, and social aspects are also getting a lot of attention.

This is another example of social media bringing sports to new audiences. A person who has never watched a baseball game can encounter a 45-second video explaining why a particular player is funny. Someone who knows nothing about hockey can discover a player through an edit. Someone who has never watched Formula 1 can become invested in a driver after seeing clips of them online.

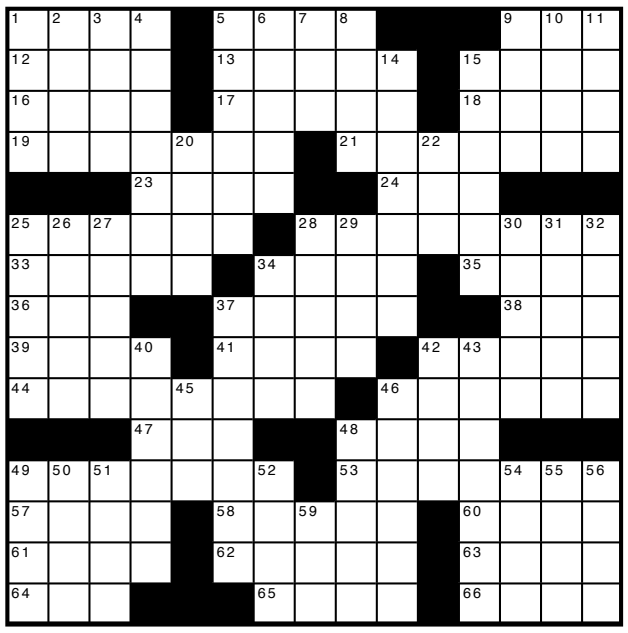
Changing the game

For women, getting into sports has also meant pushing back against stereotypes.

For years, female sports fans have faced the stereotype that their interest comes from a male partner or an attraction to athletes. The growing visibility of women as fans, creators and athletes challenges that assumption.

Being a fan does not require knowing every player, every statistic or every rule in the book. Sports can be enjoyed casually, socially or passionately, and women are increasingly creating communities that allow them to enjoy sports on their own terms.

REFLECTOR DIVERSIONS



ACROSS

1 Dirty Harry's org.
5 Hook's henchman
9 Business card abbr.
12 In ___ of
13 Bit of wisdom
15 Bar ___
16 Work units
17 King of CNN
18 Golden rule word
19 Remove spots
21 Nuns
23 Crooked
24 "Miss Saigon" setting, briefly
25 Clothing
28 Remove the lard
33 Device with 88 keys
34 Colombian city
35 Out of sight
36 Indy 500 sponsor
37 Refuge
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39 Zeno's home
41 Mayberry moppet
42 Lauder of cosmetics
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63 Bottom of the barrel
64 Enzyme suffix
65 Plant part
66 Aside from that

DOWN

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6 Signified
7 Listening device
8 Goofs
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11 Tolstoy and Gorcey
14 Confinement
15 Spice
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28 Second king of Israel
29 Gen. Robert ___
30 Blood line
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32 Caught congers
34 Superhero fashion must?
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40 Philip II's fleet
42 Years and years
43 Cheat
45 Swiss river
46 Bicycle built for two
48 Ebbets Field hero
49 Name on a razor
50 Career golfers
51 Model's stance
52 Asian country
54 "The Clan of the Cave Bear" author
55 AAA recommendations
56 Dissolve, as cells
59 Simple shelter

Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com (https://www.bestcrosswords.com). Used with permission.

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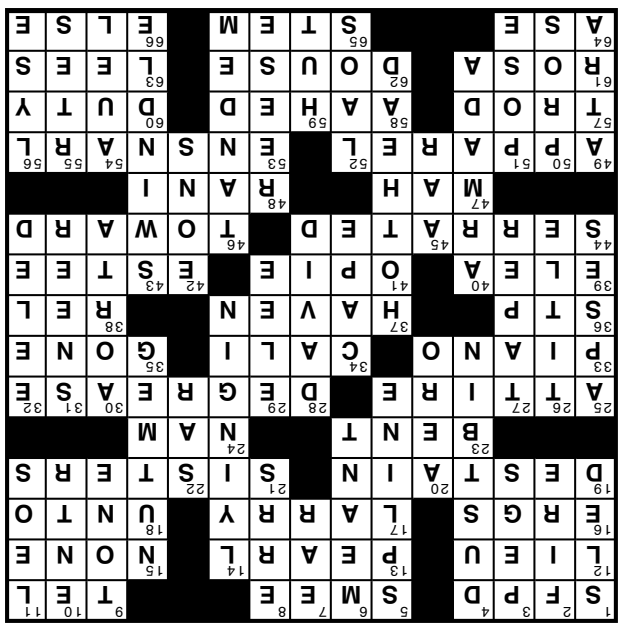
WORD SEARCH

RESEARCH PAPERS

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MLA
NOTES
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PRESENTATION
PROJECT
QUOTATION
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ROUGHT
DRAFT
SHORT
STORY
SUMMARIZE
SUPPORT
WEBSITE

CROSSWORD PUZZLE SOLUTION



Women's basketball saves sporting world from boring summer

WNBA continues to to grow as new teams and players make their mark

Zafir Nagji, Contributor

Women's basketball is sweeping through the sporting world this summer, and many sports fans are complaining about the dead-feeling offseasons of the NBA, NHL and NFL or searching for a new post-FIFA high. However, the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) is providing plenty of entertainment and competition.

From the introduction of two new expansion teams to a rookie quickly becoming one of the best players in the league, and every politically controversial piece of drama in between, the WNBA is giving sports fans of all kinds plenty of reasons to watch women's basketball.

Welcome to the WNB-eh!

The WNBA expanded by adding two new teams into the fold—the Portland Fire and the Toronto Tempo, the latter of which represents the WNBA's first international expansion and Canada's first-ever WNBA team.

After making hallmark selections in the preseason expansion draft like Marina Mabrey and Canadian legend Kia Nurse, the Tempo have quickly become one of the most popular teams in the league.

Nurse is a legend in Canadian women's basketball, playing a veteran role on this roster, while Mabrey became a WNBA All-Star for the first time this season.

She is averaging a career-high 21 points per game and even recorded a 53-point outburst against the Los Angeles Sparks.

The Tempo have put the league on notice when it comes to Canadian basketball fandom and the country's support for women's sports, as exemplified when Toronto took on the Dallas Wings on July 10, 2026 and set a new WNBA single-game attendance record of 20,996 fans.

The WNBA also beat its male counterpart in All-Star Game attendance.

Off-court politics

As nice as it would be to just talk about women's basketball, the 2026 season has been filled with plenty of controversies off the court.

Indiana Fever player Sophie Cunningham spoke to the validity of transgender athletes competing in women's sports, saying that it's "common sense" to keep trans athletes out of women's sports and that she wants to "protect young girls in a locker room, or young girls in sport who shouldn't have to go against biological men."

Former NBA players Enes Freedom and Royce White also declared themselves WNBA prospects, taking steps such as attending WNBA games and getting into feuds with players over the validity of their declarations.

The league has responded by stating that Freedom and White are ineligible for the WNBA, and both are mulling over appropriate consequences for their actions.

A rookie MVP?

Minnesota Lynx guard Olivia Miles has been nothing short of a basketball phenom in her rookie season, flooding fans' social media with highlights of her ankle-breaking dribble moves, tenacious defence and unstoppable scoring touch.

Averaging nearly 20 points per game, Miles is quickly becoming a household name in the women's assosciation.



Olivia Miles has taken the league by storm in her rookie season, becoming an All-Star and MVP contender with her unstoppable scoring abilities. Photo courtesy of Instagram @_oliviamiles_

Miles was also the only rookie selected to this year's WNBA All-Star Game — only 37 rookies in league history can lay claim to that honour.

With the Lynx sitting at a league-best 31-8, Miles also has a chance to become just the second rookie in WNBA history to win MVP, with the first being the legendary Candace Parker.

Way-too-early playoff predictions

This year's playoffs are set to be a warzone, with multiple teams having legitimate shots at taking home the WNBA Championship Trophy. The Lynx will likely lock up the league's top seed, but that does not mean they will cruise to a championship.

The Golden State Valkyries produced one of the best inaugural seasons in WNBA history in 2025 and turned it into an astounding sophomore season in 2026, currently holding the second seed.

Behind them are two absolute powerhouses—reigning MVP and Defensive Player of the Year A'ja Wilson's Las Vegas Aces sit in third place, while the new-look Atlanta Dream sit in fourth, thanks in no small part to the contributions of the league-leader in rebounds, Angel Reese.

Caitlin Clark's Indiana Fever sits just outside of that top four with the highest-scoring offence in the league, and behind them are the New York Liberty, who won the WNBA title two years ago and still feature their championship core of Sabrina Ionescu, Breanna Stewart and Jonquel Jones.

The Washington Mystics sit in seventh with the second-best defence in the league and are a leading candidate for a first-round upset in this year's playoffs. The eighth seed has yet to be decided, with less than 10 games to go.

The WNBA will take a 17-day pause for players to fulfil their international commitments at the FIBA Women's World Cup in Berlin, Germany, from Aug. 31 to Sept. 16, with the tournament taking place from Sept. 3 to 13.

After that, the WNBA will return with a short stretch of regular season games before transitioning into playoffs, which are set to be some of the most competitive, high-octane basketball games ever seen.

#S

5 shots on goal saved by Calgary Dinos goalkeeper Hany Shafie against MRU Cougars on Aug. 27

26 rebounds, a WNBA record set by Angel Reese against the Los Angeles Sparks on Aug. 24

0 wins for the Ottawa Redblacks thus far in the 2026 CFL season

1 million loonie dogs sold at the Rogers Centre during Toronto Blue Jays games in 2026

Understanding the sport gripping MRU students

As rock climbing grows in popularity, young adults are taking to the walls for a new way to stay active

Nathan Bergen, Contributor



The Mount Royal University climbing gym is freely accessible to anyone with a current recreation membership or ONECard. Photo by Serena Kanji-Ramji

Rock climbing is more than someone in full gear, clutching the surface of the Canadian Rockies as they attempt to make their way up a rocky slope. Held in local recreation centres, it's a sport that allows people to build strength and community.

The sport can be enjoyed by all, either competitively or recreationally and what makes it unique is the different courses and setups each wall consists of.

The rise of rock climbing has gotten Mount Royal University (MRU) students enthralled by the hype, such as Emma Sveistrup, who said that the amazing feeling of rock climbing led her to pursue the sport.

"Seeing the progression in real time is so rewarding, and so satisfying that it's like an addiction. I can't stop now," says Sveistrup.

Indoor and outdoor climbing are vastly different from one another. Indoor climbing takes place in specialised climbing facilities, while outdoor climbing is usually located in natural environments.

The history of rock climbing

Indoor rock climbing has its history rooted right in Calgary. The first institutional rock wall was built at the University of Calgary (UofC) ahead of the 1988 Winter Olympics as a controlled environment before athletes headed into the mountains. The university's rock wall still stands today in the basement of their kinesiology building as a drop-in facility for UCalgary students and active living members.

Later in 1990, the first commercialized rock climbing wall was built in Toronto. There, Bob Bergman, an avid rock climber, along with his wife and brother, helped build 'Joe Rockhead's', the first commercialised rock climbing facility in Canada.

Over the next few years, the facility would host many local and regional competitions, where it would gain a strong reputation among the rock climbing scene in North America and Europe ahead of the first-ever International Climbing and Mountaineering Federation (UIAA) Climbing World Championships in 1991.

The facility has remained open to the public for over 36 years and continues to be a building block in Canada's rock climbing community.

Climbing benefits

While climbing comes off as a physically demanding sport, it doesn't just benefit the body physically.

"It has benefited my mental health more than anything...it's a good way to exercise; it makes you feel good about yourself; it builds confidence."

Studies have highlighted the benefits of rock climbing. It has been proven to build endurance through consistent practice. A climber's balance and flexibility can also improve, with results being similar to the benefits of yoga. This has not only helped climbers like Sveistrup improve their grips, but it has also helped outside of the facility.

"When I go to do other physical activities, I can feel that I've gotten stronger because I've climbed," says Sveistrup.

Climbing today

With the growth of the sport, it has created an opportunity for climbers to get involved in competitions. The UIAA World Climbing Championships and World Climbing Series have three competition categories, including lead climbing, speed climbing, and bouldering.

Lead Climbing has participants climb a 12-meter wall in a six-minute time frame and get as high as they can with sections at different angles. Speed Climbing has participants on the sides of each other as they race up a 15-meter, 95-degree angled wall to ring a bell at the top. Bouldering takes place on only a four-meter-high wall at difficult angles, which has participants having to reach as many tops as possible in four minutes.

Calgary isn't a stranger to these competitions. The city recently hosted national events, including the Senior Boulder National Championships alongside Senior Lead National Championships in February 2026. These events saw a combined 548 competitors from 9 different provinces.

There are vast differences between casual and competitive climbing, highlighted by Sviestrup, mentioning the big gap between casual climbing and those who specialise in competitions.

"They're insanely good," says Sviestrup. "There's just a completely different vibe [for] people who are just doing it for fun."

Participation in climbing

With the growth of indoor climbing, more climbing facilities have been built in Calgary, making it more accessible for new climbers to try. Sveistrup says that those who are interested in participating in the sport don't need to fully commit right away.

"Just do a drop-in to start. Don't just buy a membership. Make sure you like it first," says Sveistrup. "Don't be afraid of not doing a great job because the community is so welcoming and non-judgmental."

Climbing requires little equipment, making it an easy and affordable activity to get involved in.

"Shoes and chalk, that's literally all I bring," says Sveistrup.

Different forms of climbing require different types of equipment. Most include the basics like chalk, climbing shoes, and moveable clothing. Other forms of climbing like speed climbing would require a gym rope, grigri, carabiners, and a harness if they aren't already provided by the facility.

At MRU, the recreation centre welcomes climbers of all abilities to scale the wall and build a circle of like-minded students and community members. They help beginner climbers by providing basic starting equipment to aid their start on the wall. MRU offers climbing programs and drop-in climbing for anyone ranging from age four to seniors.